

Freeman's 'Bird Calendar for the Fargo Region'³—As an aid to local bird students Mr. Freeman has presented in the April, 1919, issue of the 'Fargo College Bulletin' a list of the birds of the vicinity of Fargo, N. Dakota, with the dates of arrival or of occurrence taken mainly from his personal records. While the author makes no claim for completeness and solicits additional data, the fact that he has been able to include 181 species, hows that his little list forms an important contribution to the published literature of the birds of North Dakota. The species are arranged in systematic order with annotations. Let us hope that this excellent start may be the forerunner of a more extensive report later on, when the co-operation for which the author asks will undoubtedly add a number of species and further data of interest.—W. S.

Grinnell on the English Sparrow in Death Valley.¹—Dr. Grinnell on a recent trip to Death Valley was surprised to find a colony of English Sparrows established at the Greenland Ranch, 178 feet below sea level. He points out the fact that so far, during a period of about fifty years, no differentiation from the original English stock has been detected in the birds reared in this country. The fact remains, however, that the conditions under which the birds live have perhaps not differed materially from those prevalent in England. Now, however, we have a colony of them established in a spot characterized by probably the highest temperature and lowest relative humidity of any place in North America, and the presence of the birds at this point constitutes, as Dr. Grinnell says, an experiment actually under way which should show how permanent are the subspecific characters which separate this bird from the related European forms. The negative evidence obtained from a study of the bird in other parts of the United States which upholds the permanency of these characters seems to Dr. Grinnell to suggest that they are really germinal rather than somatic.

In his apparent haste to be up-to-date, Dr. Grinnell has adopted Kleinschmidt's separation of the English race from that of the continent, although neither Witherby nor Stresemann has been able, with abundant material, to satisfactorily distinguish them. This latter fact seems to emphasize the remarkable permanency of the characters of this bird. Does it not seem that some forms are very much more plastic and sensitive to environmental conditions than others and that *Passer domesticus domesticus* is one of the most difficult to change? Dr. Grinnell's problem is an interesting one and in the same connection would it not be in order to repeat Mr. Beebe's experiment on the effect of humid atmospheric con-

³ A Bird Calendar of the Fargo Region. By Daniel Freeman. Fargo College Bulletin, XV, No. 1, April, 1919, pp. 9-16.

¹ The English Sparrow has Arrived in Death Valley: An Experiment in Nature. By Joseph Grinnell. American Naturalist, Vol. LIII, Sept.-Oct., 1919, pp. 468-473.